

St. CYPRIAN

Bishop and Martyr,

Anno 250.

O F

DISCIPLINE,
P R A Y E R,
P A T I E N C E.

St. *Basil* the Great,
Of Solitude.

Translated by C. B.

Nec omnia, nec nihil.

L O N D O N,

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T O
P A R T H E N I A.

Madam,

IN obedience to your command I have done
into English for the use of some vertuous
persons under your charge, not only that piece
most proper, of the discipline and habit of Vir-
gins, but the other two, which you esteemed
not impertinent. When you shall be pleased to
compare my English with the holy Authors
Latin, you will easily discern, that I have pick-
ed my matter, and used a liberty in expressing
it, to the end I might deliver that which is fittest,
and the better set forth the sense and spirit of
this glorious Martyr. A considerable addition
hereunto, as touching Virginity, might be made
out of the treatises of other antient Fathers; but
I will wait for your further order, and for the
present kissing your hand take my leave.

St. Cyprian,

Of the Discipline and habit of

VIRGINS.

Discipline is the guard of hope, the stay of faith, the guide of your way to Heaven. To observe this, is life; to contemn it, death. The holy Scriptures, Old and New, commend Discipline unto us: and there is nothing more to be desired, than to be grounded on the rock, and to stand firm against all the assaults of this World, and to keep our bodies, once washed in holy Baptism, still pure and unpolluted, as Temples of the Holy Ghost.

As we are redeemed by the blood of Christ, let us do him faithful service; and let us take heed of all uncleanness, lest the Spirit forsake his dwelling. If we offend, after we have known God, and been devoted to him, there is the less hope of pardon. And Virgins to whom we address our speech, must have the greater care, by how much greater is their honour.

Virgins are the flower of the Churches offspring; the grace and ornament of our Religion;

gion; the more illustrious portion of the flock of Christ.

These are they that have renounced all carnal concupiscence, and are enamour'd of Christ, having devoted both their minds and bodies unto God, and study not to adorn themselves for any other, or to please any but their Lord, from whom they expect the reward of Virginitie.

Mat. 19. The reward of Virginitie is the Kingdom of Heaven: what need they care for earthly ornaments or the pleasures of this World? or, why should they value the courtship of men, when they are the delight of God?

Continence and chastity consists not only in the integrity or pureness of the flesh, but also in modesty of apparel. A Virgin ought not only to be, but also to appear a Virgin. Her outward dress must be such, as may not bring her into suspicion; nor cast any spot upon her fame and reputation.

What should a Virgin do abroad in a gay and affected *habit*, as if she either *had* a Husband, or did *seek* on; let her rather be afraid of pleasing the eyes of men, if she be a Virgin, and not expose her self to the peril of humane Love, who reserves her self for Divine.

A Virgin hath enter'd into a battel against
the

the lusts of the flesh, and must not gratifie her enemy, nor glory in the beauty or trimness of that which must be subdued and mortified. It becomes not any Christian, much less a Virgin, to prize at an high rate the perishing bravery of the flesh: the Glory of Heaven, eternal bliss, the sight of God, this is the object of our best affections.

If at any time our Virgin may Glory in the *flesh*, then is the time, when the flesh is given up to be tormented for confession of the NAME of Christ, when a faithful maid is found to be of more strength and courage than furious men: when she suffereth the Cross, the fire, the Sword, that she may be crowned. These pains and wounds are the fairest Jewels to adorn her flesh, the better ornaments of a Virgin body.

BUT there are some Virgins rich and wealthy; who would make shew of their estate, and use the good things they have. Let them know first, that she is rich who is rich in Christ, that the truest goods are the spiritual, the Divine, the heavenly things; which bring us unto God, and there remain with us in an everlasting possession. The things of this World, are to be contemned with the World: whose Pomps and vanities we then renounced, when by a happy change we were converted unto God.

We

We that are Christians ought to walk in the steps of our Master, and the firmness of our faith must be testified by the conformity of our actions.

Thou saist thou art *rich*: but for all that, the Apostles will prescribe a moderation of thy dress. And if they put such restraint upon women, who have somewhat to plead for their trimming, because they must please their Husbands, certainly Virgins are under a stricter obligation. That which may be permitted unto the married, is not expedient for those of a single life.

But if thou by thy sumptuous and curious ornaments and publick ostentation of thy bravery, inviteest the eyes, and callest forth the sighs of young men after thee, and dost offer them matter for their lust, and fuel for their flames; thou at once art guilty of their ruine, and of depriving thy self of the honor of Christs Virgin-Company.

Thou saist, thou art *rich*: but it becomes not a Virgin to boast her riches. Blessed Peter, to whom Christ committed his Flock, was endued with a Divine power, rich in grace, but confessed he had *neither Gold nor Silver*. *Mat. 3.* Those spiritual riches we shall not possess, if we prefer the World before Christ.

Thou saist, thou art to make use of the good things,

things, God hath given thee: Use them, but
no further thy salvation: Use them, but to good
purposes: Use them, but to serve God with
them. Let the poor know, that thou art rich,
and the needy be the better for thy wealth:
put out thy money to use with God: feed
Christ: lay up thy treasure in heaven; and
get the prayers of good people to help thee
thither.

It is a misery to be rich, if we forget the
end why God hath bestowed riches on us. God
that hath given thee a sweet voice, meant not
that it should be spent in wanton songs, but
in his praises: and thy estate was given thee
for works of piety and charity, not to be an
instrument of pride and Vain-Glory.

Whosoever prides herself in precious ap-
parel and costly dressing, declares herself to
have but a very low esteem of Virgin-modesty
and meekness. She that puts on too brave ap-
parrel, cannot put on Christ; and while she
adorns herself with rings and Jewels, loses
the better ornaments of a gracious heart and
an humble spirit. None have apparel more
precious, than they to whom Virginity is vile.

Let not our Virgin adulterate her face or spot
her natural beauty by laying colours on: in they
are injurious to Gods works, who endeavour to
reform and transfigure what he hath formed.

May they not fear least at the last day God acknowledg not the painted countenance which he never made: lest he should reject such a one from his rewards, and say, This is none of my work, nor my Image, thou hast changed thy skin, thou hast spotted thy face, thou hast belyed thy Visage, thou canst not see God, who art not *his* but thy own creature.

Let our Virgin also be careful to avoid all immodest company and unchast talk, whereby the ears and the mind are in danger to be defiled.

And what should a Virgin doe at a *wedding*, who has no mind to marry? The Licentious behaviour at such meetings is contrary to the design and purpose of a Virgin-life.

What should she doe at the promiscuous bath! refresh her body? Rather pollute her soul, and even defile her self, while she washes. Grant she contain her own eyes, yet she exposes her nakedness to the eyes of men, and while she is lustfully lookt upon, is violated,

Hear me ye Virgins, the servants of God, and be not enslaved by the love of worldly pleasure and bravery. The way is narrow which tendeth unto glory. By this way go the Martyrs, the Virgins, and all the righteous. Beware of the broad way, there are the snares

of death: there the enemy flatters that he may deceive, smiles that he may hurt, entices that he may kill.

The first, the hundred fold is the fruit of Martyrs: the second, the sixty fold is yours: as your reward is, so let your self-denial be, in the next degree to Martyrs. Such a high ascent will ask your constant labour.

Consider from what pains your Virginity rescues you. The woman brings forth her Child, with sorrow, and is subject to her Husband; you know not the sad groans of travel, nor the fears, nor the cares of Mothers: Ye have no Husbands for your Lords, but Christ is your Lord, and your head. *Luk. 20.*

And ye are like unto the Angels: having already possession of that privilege of the resurrection, and passing through this World, without the contagion of it; while you persevere in chastity, ye are Angelical; only hold fast your resolution, and as you have begun happily, go on; despise earth; look up to God and Heaven.

The first word was *Encrease and multiply*, the second, *Contain*. There was need at first that mankind should be encreased and spread over the earth; now this World is peopled by generation, it is fit we should be prepar'd for another by continence. They *Gen. 7.*
Mat. 19.
that can receive it, let them receive it.

Our Lord does not command, but exhort, nor impose a Yoke of necessity, but leave it to the freedom of our choice.

But when he speaks of several mansions in his Fathers house, he intimates some are higher than other; and those are sought by you; the greater your holiness is, the better shall be your place above. You shall be repaid hereafter in Divine pleasures, for those carnal delights you have here renounced.

Be mindful of holy Discipline, Religious, Faithful, Humble, Long-suffering, meek, patient of injuries, prone to shew mercy, unanimous and kind to one another; Let the elder guide the younger; the younger observe the elder; equals incite and help one each other in the way to heavenly Glory; and when ye are come thither, **REMEMBER ME.**

St. Cyprian,

Of the Lords

PRAYER.

Our Lord, among his other salutary precepts, hath also given his people a form of Prayer: that whilst we speak to the Father in the words of the Son, we may be heard the more graciously.

What can be a more spiritual prayer, than that which is given us by Christ, from whom also we receive the Holy Spirit?

What is a more true prayer to the Father, than that which proceeded from the mouth of the Son who is the truth! To pray otherwise than he hath taught, is not only ignorance but sin.

'Tis a loving and familiar prayer, to call upon God in his own words, to send up into his ears the prayer of his Son: when the Father owns the words of his Son; and he that dwells in the heart, is also seen in the voice.

Whereas we have Christ the Advocate with the Father for our sins, how can we sinners better ask forgiveness than in the prayer of our Advocate?

What.

Of the Lords Prayer.

Whatsoever ye ask the Father in my Name, he will give it you : And we shall obtain it the more effectually, if we ask it in his prayer also.

In prayer, let our speech and our gesture be decent and humble, remembring we are under Gods eye, which we must be careful to please, both by the posture of our body and the moderation of our voice. For, as it is the part of an impudent fellow, to use rude clamors; so it becomes a civil person to pray modestly. God regards not the loudness of the voice, but the devotion of the heart.

Our Father] Our Lord, the teacher of peace and unity, hath prescribed us a Common Prayer, and will have every one to pray for all; for he hath made us all one. Unanimous prayer is most effectual and powerful with the God of peace.

How great is the indulgence of God, how plentiful is goodness, who gives us leave to call him *Father* ! Which name we should not dare to use, but through him who hath taught us to say so.

Let us remember, when we call God *Father*, that we ought to behave our selves as his obedient Children. So shall he delight in us, as we have cause to glory in him.

And as our Father is in heaven, let us mind heavenly things, and live heavenly lives.

When we pray, *Hallowed be thy Name*] We do not mean that he can be made holy by us ; but desire

fire

fire that as he is holy, so we may be holy; and that, as we were sanctified in baptism, we may persevere in that which we have begun. This we beg day and night, that the sanctification and vivification, which we have from the grace of God, may be still preserved by his power.

In the like sense we pray, *Thy Kingdom come*] For God is King eternal. One Kingdom, we desire, may come, promised by God to us, and acquired for us by the blood and passion of Christ: that we, who have formerly served the World, may reign by him, having renounced the World, and gotten Victory over all the vanities thereof. And we have need of continual prayer, that we may not, as the *Jews* did, to whom it was first promised, fall from this spiritual Kingdom. Here also do we pray for the second coming of Christ, to receive us into his kingdom of glory.

When we say, *Thy will be done*] We mean not, that God should do what he will: (for who can resist it?) but that we may do what God will have us do. To which end, we have need of Gods gracious assistance. For no man hath strength of his own, but is supported by the indulgence and mercy of God. Now, the will of God is that which Christ did do and teach: constancy in faith, modesty in speech, justice in actions, works of mercy and compassion, patience of injuries, peateableness; to love God with all the heart,

to prefer nothing before Christ, who preferred nothing before us; to bear the Crosse, and be faithful to the death. This is the way to be co-heirs with Christ, this is to do the commands of God, and to fulfil the pleasure of our heavenly Father.

And this, *as in heaven, * so in earth* * as by the be-
that is, both in our souls and bodies. *by angels, &
by us.*
For, having our bodies from earth, our souls from heaven, we are made up of earth and heaven, and pray that in both, namely, in body and soul, the will of God may be perfected: that the earthly part and the lusts thereof being subdued to the heavenly, we may do the things that we would.

We may also understand by earth, earthly minded men, for whose conversion here we pray; that, as in heaven, namely by the regenerate, Gods will is done, so it may by them likewise, being born again, and of earthly, made heavenly.

Our daily bread] Spiritually is Christ. He is the bread of life that came down from *Ioh. 6.* heaven. This we desire to receive daily, being our food of Salvation. Or, we pray for sufficient maintenance for this temporal life, not regarding riches and superfluities, but being content with necessities.

After supply of food is sought *Forgiveness of sins*] that, as we are nourished by God, we may live

to God; and, that we may provide not only for temporal, but for eternal life; unto which we shall attain, if our sins be forgiven. That no man may flatter himself, with a conceit of innocence, we are minded of our daily transgressions, whilst we are taught every day to ask forgiveness. And he that hath taught us to pray for mercy, hath promised to give it.

But, on this condition, that we shew mercy, and forgive others. *With what measure we mete, it shall be measured unto us.* Mat. 7.

The Servant, who would not forgive his fellow Servant, is cast into Prison. He forfeited his Lords mercy for denying mercy. Thou shalt be left without excuse at the day of Judgment, when thou shalt be sentenc'd out of thy own mouth, and suffer as thou hast done. He that dies without Charity, though he be killed for the name of Christ, cannot be with Christ. And what a crime is that, which the Baptism of blood cannot wash away!

Next we pray, *Suffer us not to be led into temptation*] Where we see that the Adversary can do nothing against us without Gods permission: that we may learn to fear God alone, and to devote our selves to him. He will not give the enemy power against us, but either to correct us when we offend, or to glorifie us when we are tryed.

When we thus pray, we are admonished of

our infirmities: that none may extol himself, nor assume to himself the glory of his confession, or of his passion, since the Lord to teach us humility hath said, *watch and pray that ye*
Mar. 14. come not into temptation.

Lastly we say; *Deliver us from evil*] Nothing more remains to be craved: when we have once gotten the Divine protection, we stand safe and secure against all the assaults of the Devil and the World.

Our Lord hath not only taught us to pray by his words, but by his example. And, if he prayed who was without sin, how much more ought we sinners to pray! If he watched, should not we also watch! he pray'd not for himself, but for our offences: that we might be forgiven, that our faith might not fail, that we might be one, as he and his Father are one. And hence we may understand their crime, who break peace and Unity, for which Christ pray'd so ardently, and without which there is no coming to the Kingdom of God.

Now, when we stand to pray, we must be vigilant and sincere. Let all carnal and secular cogitations depart, and the mind think upon nothing but that which is prayed. To this purpose, the Priest prepares the minds of the Brethren with a Preface, saying, *Lift up your hearts,* to which they answer, *We lift them up unto the Lord,*
 signi-

Of the Lords Prayer.

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signifying, that we should then be mindful of the Lord and nothing else.

Wherefore, let the breast be shut against the Adversary, and opened to God alone. The subtil enemy creeps upon us often and steals away our thoughts, and we have one thing in the heart, another in the tongue: when-as, it is not the sound of the voice, but the intention of the mind that commends our Prayer.

What sloth is this to be carried away with vain imaginations, when thou art speaking to the Lord? what should be more considered, than that thou art in conference with God? How canst thou expect to be heard by him, when thou heedest not thy self? or to have him mindful of thy Prayer, when thou art mindless! This is to betray thy self to the enemy, to offend the majesty of God, to wake with the eyes and sleep with the heart. If thou wouldest prevail, take the Apostles admonition; *Be instant in Prayer, watching therein.* Col. 4.

Moreover, let us not come unto God with unfruitful and naked words. *Thy Prayers and thy Alms are ascended,* said the Angel to *Cornelius*. The prayers that are accompanied with good works find a speedy access to the throne of God. *Loose the bond of wickedness, break thy bread to the hungry, &c.* Esa. 58.

Then shalt thou call; and God shall answer, and while

while thou art speaking shalt say, Here I am.

To conclude: In the office of prayer we find Daniel and the three Children, strong in Faith, and conquerors in Captivity, to have ^{Dan. 6.} observed three hours, the third, the sixth, the ninth. These have been observed also by Christians. For at the third hour the Holy Ghost came upon the Apostles; at the sixth Peter was praying in the upper Room; at the ninth our Lord finished his passion.

But to us, besides the hours anciently observed, the times of prayer are increased. The hours of the night also, which we spend in prayer, are not lost: Yea, our prayers will turn our darkness into light: In the life to come there is light perpetual, and perpetual prayer and praise: Let us here imitate the future state, watch night and day, and not desist or faint, but continually apply our selves to this heavenly everlasting exercise of prayer and thanksgiving.

St. Cyprian,

Of the Good of

PATIENCE.

WE, my Brethren, are Philosophers not in words but deeds, and profess wisdom not in habit but truth; we do embrace vertue, not boast of it; and live exactly, not speak big! and therefore, as the Servants of God, must humbly exercise that Patience, which we have learned of our Master.

Patience is a Vertue common to us with God, who commends it to us not only by his precept, but example. He is our Lord and our Father; let us, as Servants, be obedient; and, as Children, not degenerate.

How great is the Patience of Almighty God, who endures the Idolatrous, the sacrilegious, the blasphemous! who makes his Sun to shine, and his clouds to rain upon the good and bad, and excludes not the most unworthy from his daily benefits! The wicked and the godly, the unthankful as well as the thankful have favourable winds, sweet fountains, fruitful Gardens, plentiful Harvests. And though God hath weapons enow

at hand to destroy all ungodly men, and to revenge himself of all his enemies; yet he spares them from time to time, and suffers them to live, that they may repent, and come in to the Lord at last: For, *he desireth not the death of a sinner.*

That Patience is a Divine vertue, and that it makes men like unto God, is manifest from our Saviours words; where having admonished us to be gentle and kind, and to do good to our enemies, he concludes saying, *Be ye perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

What an honour is it to be made like unto God; what a happiness to be good after his Pattern; to be partakers of his perfection, and sharers in his praise!

Jesus Christ, our God and our Lord, hath not only by words instructed us in this, but hath also fulfilled it in deeds: and among other admirable demonstrations of conformitie to his Fathers will, hath lively represented Patience and Humility. That he descended from heaven to earth: that being without sin he bore our sins: that being their Master he washed his Disciples feet: that being innocent he suffered death for the guilty: The reproaches and calumnies, the stripes and wounds, the persecutions he endured both in the course of his life and at his death: These are the instances of his singular Patience and Humility.

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He was reviled, whose mouth was full of blessings; He was crowned with thorns who crowns the Martyrs with never fading flowers: He was spoiled of his raiment, that bestows upon men the robes of immortality; was offer'd gall, who gives the bread of Heaven; Vinegar, who entertains us with the cup of Salvation. That innocent, that righteous person; yea innocence itself, and righteousness itself, *is numbred among transgressors*: Truth itself is accused by false witness; the Judge of the World is condemned, and God the Word speaks not a word, but is led *as a Lamb to the slaughter.* Esa. 53.

And when the earth trembles, the heaven is darkened, the Sun is ashamed to look upon the Jews cruelty; He is silent and quiet, and conceals his Majesty, and bears every thing and perseveres to the end; that a perfect example of Patience might be consummated in our Saviour.

After all injuries, he is ready to receive his murderers to mercy, if they will be converted: those crucifiers of him, those blasphemers, those enemies of his name, as he prayed on the Cross for their repentance, so, if they acknowledge their sin and amend their lives, this patient and bountiful Lord of ours, will not only admit them to pardon, but to the reward of his heavenly Kingdom. He that shed the blood of Christ shall have life by the same blood. Such and so great

is the patience of Christ: and had it not been so, the Church of God had not had *St. Paul*,

Wherefore, beloved Brethren, if we be in Christ, if we have put him on, if he be the way of our Salvation, let us follow him with holy steps, and walk after his example.

Moreover, we find the Patriarchs and Prophets, and all the just ones that went afore Christ and figured him, to have been careful of no vertue more than of Patience. *Abrubam*, the Father of the faithful, being commanded to offer up his Son,

Gen. 22. with all devout patience obeys: and his Son *Isaac* patiently yields up himself to be offered. *Jacob*, threatned by his Brother,

Gen. 28. 32. patiently leaves his Country, and more patiently, afterwards, meets his Brother, as a suppliant, with presents of peace. *Iosaph* revengeth not himself

37. 45. on his brethren that had sold him, but sends them away with Corn, and their money again. *Moses* is despised by an ungrateful and

Ex. 32. stiff-necked people, yet still meek and patient intercedes, to the Lord for

them. But, in *David*, Christs royal Ancestor according to the flesh, we most admire his Patience, truly Christian; in that, when he had his malicious enemy and cruel persecutor at his mercy, he would not lay

1 Sam. 24. his

his hand upon him; and after, when he was slain by another, punished the doer. Lastly, so many Prophets slain, so many Martyrs honoured with glorious sufferings, who by patience were advanced to celestial Crowns, plainly teach us, that if we will hereafter receive a reward for our pains and tribulations, we must bear them all with patience here.

How necessary and profitable patience is, will further appear to you, beloved Brethren, if we call to mind the first Sentence pronounced against our lapsed Parents, whereby we are all bound over to a sad and miserable life. Whence it is that every one at his first entrance into the world begins his life with tears, and knows to do nothing else but cry: The voice of nature is self-testifying, that Man is born to misery. The only remedy whereof is patience. And this is the more necessary, because our old Adversary is still assaulting us with temptations and persecutions. It is patience, whereby we are enabled to bear poverty, to go into prison, to carry chains, to endure the sword, the fire, the cross, and all variety of torments.

All these things we suffer patiently, supported by Faith and Hope: For to live by Faith and Hope, this is to be a Christian. And let no man faint in his course through impatience: Let no man be called off by any temptations, or stop-

ped by any violence, in the race of glory. All's lost that we have attained, if we hold not out to the end with patience.

Patience preserves other virtues, and resists the contrary vices. Charity is the bond of brotherhood, the ground of peace, the strength of unity. Take from it patience, and it falls away. Neither unity, nor peace can be maintained, unless we bear with one another, and by patience keep the knot of Concord inviolate. That you may not swear, nor curse; that you may not return an injury, but forgive the offending brother; that you may love and pray for your enemies and persecutors: You must owe all this to the virtue of patience. St. Stephen when he was stoned by the Jews did not call for revenge of himself, but for pardon of his enemies; and thus it became the first Martyr of Christ, to shew the way of a glorious death to his followers, and not only to preach the Gospel of Christ, but also imitate his patience and lenity.

Patience is necessary to bear the various incommodities of our flesh, the infirmities of body, the losses and crosses to which mankind is exposed in this world; Neither is there any more notable difference between Good and Evil men than this, that evil men murmur and blaspheme in their adversities, good men take all things quietly.

The

The patience of holy Job was approved and rewarded, who was tryed by the loss of his estate; death of his children, sores of body, and that nothing might be wanting to his afflictions, his Wife is armed against him: Satan making use of his old stratagem, as if he could always overthrow the Man by the Woman. Yet the invincible Job goes on through all conflicts, and is crowned at last with the reward and glory of patience.

That we may the better understand the good of Patience, let us consider the evil of Impatience. For, as patience is the grace of Christ, so impatience is the sin of the Devil. And as he in whom Christ dwells is found to be patient, so is he, whose mind is possessed by the Devil, always impatient. How was it in the beginning? The Devil was impatient to see man made after Gods Image, and whereupon having first undone himself and us, *Adam* out of an impatient desire of the deadly food, fell into death. *Cain* not induring that his Brothers sacrifice should be better accepted, slew his Brother, *Esau* impatient of hunger sold his Birth-right. The *Isr.* because they had not the patience to wait for the return of *Moses* from the Mount, fell to Idolatry. In after times how many Prophets did they kill and slay, in their impatience, not enduring their

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holy Sermons and Admonitions; and at last, upon the same score, pursued to the Death and crucified the Lord of life!

And what is the cause of Heresies in the Church, of factions and rebellions, but the same impatience? That which is built up and kept standing by patience, by impatience is brought to ruine and confusion.

Wherefore, beloved Brethren, the profits of patience and the hurts of impatience being well weighed; let us give ourselves to the practise of this Christian vertue. This commend us to God: this keeps us in safety: this tempers anger, bridles the tongue, rules the mind, conserves the peace, quencheth lust, subdues pride, lendeth quarrells, moderates the power of wealthy men, comforts the poor mans want. This is a guard to the Virgins blessed purity, to the Widows laborious chastity, to the Conjugal love of the married. By this are the prosperous made humble, the afflicted cheerful; the reproached meek and gentle. By this are we taught quickly to forgive those that have injur'd us, and long to ask forgiveness of those whom we have wronged. By this temptations are conquered, persecutions suffered, and Martyrs perfected.

In our persecutions, let us patiently expect him, who will at last appear with Power and Majesty (He who was so lowly and silent once)

to avenge himself and all his followers. Let the man who makes hast to be avenged consider, that Christ who *is exalted above all*, is yet patient: He that is adored in heaven, is not yet avenged on his enemies in earth. Phil. 2.

His patience must we meditate upon in all our persecutions and troubles, his coming must we dutifully attend: Nor, by no irreligious and immodest importunity, crave an execution of judgment before the Lords own time. Only, be constant, labour, watch, persevere, and observe the commands of our Lord, that when the great day appears, we may not go with the wicked into everlasting punishment, but with the righteous into life eternal.

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perishing, but with the righteous
into life eternal.

SOLITUDE

*An Epistle of St. Basil the Great, to
St. Gregory the Divine.*

[Done out of the Greek.]

I Know your Epistle, as men know their friends children by their conspicuous likeness to the parents. For, whereas you say, the nature, or condition of the place is of no great force to beget in your mind an inclination to live here with us, before you understand somewhat of our way of life and conversation; This indeed is a sentence worthy of you, and proceeding from a mind, which setteth at nought all things on earth, in comparison of the blessedness laid up for us in the promise of God.

And truly, I am ashamed to write, what I do my self in this Solitude night and day. For though I have left behind me the business of the City, the occasions of a Thousand evils, yet
have

have I not hitherto been able to leave and renounce my self, but am like unto those at Sea, that being not accustomed to Navigation, are sick and ready to die : They are displeased at the greatness of the Ship, as tossing them too much, and thence removing into a little Vessel are diseased there and sick still : Because their distemper and ill humour goes along with them. Such is also our case ; for, carrying with us our inward swelling perturbations, we are, in all places, in like troubles, and have gained no great matter by this retirement.

Yet will I declare, what is our design, what we ought to do, and what opportunities we have to follow the steps of him, who hath led us the way to salvation. For he saith, If any one will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross, and follow me.

We ought to endeavour to have the mind in quietness. For, as the Eye continually rouled about, and turned now aside, now to things above and below, cannot see exactly ; but the sight must be fixed upon the object, if it will take a clear view thereof : So the mind of man, drawn about every way by a thousand worldly cares, 'tis impossible it should perfectly apply it self unto the Truth.

He that is not yet tyed up in the bonds of Wedlock, is torn with eager desires, unruly lusts
and

and unlucky loves: and when possessed of a yoke fellow, another troop of cares overtake him: if childless, the desire of children afflicts him; the custody of his wife, the keeping of house, the looking to servants, losses in bargaining, quarrels with neighbours, suits at law, danger of traffick, toil of husbandry, all these bring vexation: every day brings a new sorrow to his heart, and the nights entertaining the daily cares distract his mind with troublesom imaginations.

The way to escape all this, is to leave the world. I mean not, the body should be gotten out of it, but that the soul be disengaged from the concerns of the body, and become (as it were) without city, without house, without propriety, without company; having no estate, no living, no business, no contracts; empty of humane learning, prepared to receive in the heart divine instructions proceeding from a heavenly Teacher.

The preparation of the heart is the unlearning, or forgetting, the lessons which had formerly taken place in it by evil custom. For as you cannot write in wax, unless you first doe out the letters afore-written: so neither can divine doctrines be seated in the mind, except the anticipate opinions be removed thence.

And to this purpose Solitude yields us the

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greatest help, which laies asleep the passions, and gives reason time to destroy them utterly, or to bring them in subjection. For, as wild beasts being gently handled are at last made tame, so desires, and angers, and fears, and sorrows, those dangerous enemies of the mind, being laid asleep by solitude, and not stirred by daily provocations, are the more easily conquer'd by the power of Reason.

Wherefore let the place be such as ours is, separate and free from the mixture of Company, that by nothing from without the continuation of our religious exercise may be broken off. For, 'tis the constant exercise of Piety, which feeds the mind with divine Contemplations.

And what is more happy, than upon earth to imitate the quire of Angels? early in the morning to fall to prayers, and with hymns and songs to worship the Creator? and then, the Sun brightly shining forth, to go to work, prayer being ever present with us, and praise (as it were) seasoning all our actions. For the sweetness of holy songs disposes the soul to a sweet and cheerful temper.

Solitude then, begins the purgation of the mind, while the tongue talks not of humane affairs, nor the eyes gaze upon the colour and feature of beautiful bodies, nor the ear defiles the heart by listening to wanton verses, or
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(which is the undoing of the soul) to the drollery of jesters and scurrilous persons. For, if the mind be not carried away to outward things, nor drawn unto the world by the senses, it is gather'd into it self, and hath strength to get up to the contemplation of God, and being there encompass't with divine beauty and light, takes no notice of natural things, nor careth for food or rayment; but having rest from earthly thoughts, the soul transferreth all his studies to the obtaining of eternal riches, how he may make a right use of Temperance and Fortitude, justice and prudence, and the other vertues, subordinate to these, which direct the vertuous person to perform all the actions of life decently.

Now the best way to find out what is right and decent, is the meditation of the divinely inspired Scriptures. For in them are seen, both the Rules of good life and the Examples of blessed men, written and delivered down as lively patterns of holy conversation, and proposed to us that we should imitate their good works. So that whatsoever any one feels himself in need of, if he search the Scriptures, he thence receiveth, as from a common shop of medicines, a remedy fit for every grief.

He that is studious of Temperance, assiduously reads the History of Joseph, and from him

takes a lesson of Temperance, observing him not only abstinent from the act of unchaste pleasure, but firmly habituate in vertue: A lecture of Fortitude. the Reader findes in *Iob*, who remained the same man in the change of his estate, becoming on a sudden, of a rich man poor, of a father of many Children Childless, preserving always the strength of his mind; and when his Friends, who came to comfort, reproacht him and aggravated his misery, conquering all with patience.

Again, if one consider, how he may at once excel in meekness and in courage, so as to use his courage against sin and his meekness towards men: he shall find *David*, valiant in the actions of War, but meek and gentle in forgiving enemies. Such a one was also *Moses*, rising up with great courage against those that offended God, and with no less meekness of spirit bearing the reproaches cast upon himself.

Thus every where as Painters when they copy out a picture, looking oft upon the pattern, do study to draw the likeness thereof into their own work; so it becomes a student, one that aimeth at the perfection of Vertue, to observe the lives of the Saints, as certain lively and moving images, and to make their Good his own by imitation.

Moreover, prayers that succeed after Reading,
do

do find the Soul more fresh and active, being already affected with a desire, or love, of God. Now, that is good prayer which imprints in the soul an effectual notion of God: and God is said to inhabit in us when we have him in perpetual remembrance. So we become the Temple of God, when the continuance of his memory is not interrupted by earthly cares, nor the mind disturbed by sudden motions; but the lover of God, shunning all things else retires unto God, and banishing all provocations to lust addiceth himself to the instruments and exercise of Vertue.

And here first of all, we must study, not to be rude and uncivil in the use of speech; but to ask a question without love of contention, and to answer without vain-glory: not to cut off or interrupt any man in his discourse, when he speaks to the purpose, nor to desire by way of ostentation to insert words of our own. Just measures both of hearing and speaking are to be observed.

We must learn without shame-fac'dness, and teach without enviousness: and if another hath taught us any thing, we ought not to conceal it (as naughty women supposititious children) but gratefully acknowledg the Author of our knowledge.

The intention of the Voice, is best, being moderate; not too low, lest it reach not the ear; nor too high, lest it offend the ear.

Consider first with your self what you are about

to say, and then utter your words; affable at meetings, pleasant in conversation, not hunting after delight by scurrility, but by loving advice shewing mildness, always avoiding asperity, even in reproof, for if you take up your self humbly first, so shall you be more pleasing to him that needs your help.

And for the most part, to us is profitable that manner of correction, which the prophet used: who did not himself condemn *David*, but brought in a story of another person, and made the King judge of his own offence; so that pronouncing judgment against himself, he had nothing to complain of his Reprover.

Now, an humble and lowly mind appears in a heavy eye bent upon the earth, a neglected dress, untrim'd hair, mean clothing. So, what Mourners observe sometimes upon occasion, we use to do of our own accord.

Let the Coat be girt about thy body in a manner, neither effeminate and curious, nor careless and slovenly.

Let thy going be neither slow, to betray the laziness; nor over hasty, to declare the rashness of thy mind.

In Apparel, let thy end be to cover thy flesh, and defend thee against the cold of Winter and the heat of summer.

Seek not after beauty in the colour, nor
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fineness in the making of thy garment: for, to look about for bright colours in thy apparel, is as bad as womens bravery, who paint their cheeks and dy their hair. But let thy Coat be coarse and thick cloth, that a single one, without a fellow, may keep thee warm.

Let thy shoes be of small price, yet sufficient to serve thy necessity.

In short, as in rayment respect must be had to usefulness; so in food, bread will satisfie the hunger of a healthy man, and water will quench his thirst: add a dish of herbs, or roots, there will be enough to maintain strength of body for necessary uses.

Take heed of eating greedily: keep always a staid and gentle and temperate course. Let thy mind never stray from God; but from the quality of thy food, and the frame of thy body, take occasion to give him praise and glory, seeing how various sorts of nourishment fitted for the various temper of our bodies the Maker and Goyernor of all hath provided.

Before meat, let Grace be said, besitting Gods gifts, which he gives at present, and provides in future: After meat Grace again, Thanksgiving for what we have receiv'd, and request for what he hath promis'd.

Let there be one hour of eating, set and appointed, and returning in order, that of the
four

four and twenty hours of day and night, no more than this one be spent upon the body, the rest employd by our religious man, in the exercises and care of his soul.

His sleeps must be light, and such as easily go off, convenient to the proportion of diet, and purposely broken, to admit of holy Meditations. For, to be taken with deep sleep, and to have the body so overcome, as to give access to absurd dreams, involves the sleeper in a kind of death every day.

BUT as to the Contemplators and Religious, What the Morning is to others, Midnight is to them. And the quietness of the night exceedingly gratifies the mind with leisure, neither the eyes nor the ears letting into the heart hurtful sights or sounds: but the Soul is alone with himself (God only present) and calls to remembrance and corrects his errours, setting himself bounds never to be transgressed, and soliciting the divine goodness to assist him and bring all his studies and endeavours to perfection.

The End.

Addition. p. 8. Virginity is a life of Angels, the chancel of the Soul, the huge advantage of Religion, the great opportunity for the retirements of devotion; and being empty of cares, it is full of prayers: being unmingled with the world, it is apt to converse with God; &c. Holy Liv. p. 67.

